United Nations

Report of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country

General Assembly

Official Records
Fifty-third session
Supplement No. 26 (A/53/26)

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United Nations • New York, 1998

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ISSN 0255-173X

[Original: English/Spanish]
[3 November 1998]

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I. Introduction

1. The Committee on Relations with the Host Country was established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 2819 (XXVI) of 15 December 1971. The Assembly, in its resolution 52/159 of 15 December 1997, *inter alia* requested the Committee to review its membership and composition, with the participation of observers, to consider proposals regarding its membership and composition and to report on the results of its deliberations to the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly at its fifty-third session. The Assembly also decided to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-third session the item entitled "Report of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country". The present report is submitted pursuant to resolution 52/159.

2. The report is composed of four sections. The recommendations and conclusions of the Committee are contained in section IV.

II. Terms of reference and organization of the work of the Committee

3. In 1998, there were no changes in the membership of the Committee, which was as follows:

Bulgaria	Iraq
Canada	Mali
China	Russian Federation
Costa Rica	Senegal
Côte d'Ivoire	Spain
Cyprus	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
France	United States of America
France	
Honduras	

4. Effective 31 October 1997, the Chairman of the Committee, Nicos Agathocleous (Cyprus), relinquished his functions as Chairman. On 17 November 1997, at its 190th meeting, the Committee elected by consensus the newly appointed Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations, Sotirios Zackheos, as its new Chairman. The representatives of Bulgaria, Canada and Côte d'Ivoire served as Vice-Chairmen, and Emilia Castro de Barish (Costa Rica) served as Rapporteur.

5. The terms of reference of the Committee were determined by the General Assembly in its resolution 2819 (XXVI). In May 1992, the Committee adopted, and in March 1994 slightly modified, a detailed list of topics for its consideration, which is set out in annex I.

6. During the period under review, the Committee held the following meetings: the 190th, on 17 November 1997; the 191st, on 18 February 1998; the 192nd, on 13 May 1998; the 193rd, on 17 September 1998; and the 194th, on 30 October 1998.

7. The Bureau of the Committee consists of the Chairman, the Rapporteur, the three Vice-Chairmen and a representative of the host country, who attends Bureau meetings ex officio. The Bureau is charged with the consideration of topics before the Committee, with the exception of the question of the security of missions and the safety of their personnel, which the Committee keeps under permanent review in plenary meetings. The Bureau held six meetings: on 13 November and 18 December 1997 and on 9 January, 22 April, 5 May and 14 July 1998. Among other issues, the Bureau considered the composition and membership of the Committee, matters of diplomatic indebtedness and the preparations for the health insurance fair for the diplomatic community.

8. The Working Group on the use of diplomatic motor vehicles, parking and related matters, established at the 181st meeting, held no meetings during the reporting period since there were no new developments in that area. In view of the resignation of the former Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Agathocleous, who concurrently headed the Working Group, the chairmanship of the Working Group also became vacant. The Committee did not appoint a new officer to assume the position.

9. The Working Group on Indebtedness, whose mandate is to consider all the aspects of the problem, held one meeting, on 12 February 1998. The Working Group was briefed by the host country representatives on the problem of indebtedness. It also discussed matters concerning the preparation of a health insurance fair for the diplomatic community. In May 1998, Mr. Christo S. Christov (Bulgaria) resigned as Chairperson of the Working Group upon his departure from the Bulgarian Mission to the United Nations. The Chairman held informal consultations with the members of the Committee with a view to identifying a suitably qualified candidate to assume the chairmanship of that body.

10. On 24 February 1998, the health insurance fair was held under the auspices of the Committee and in close cooperation with the host country delegation. Interested delegations had an opportunity to meet with five prospective providers of health-care services.

III. Topics dealt with by the Committee

A. Membership and composition of the Committee

11. By paragraph 7 of its resolution 52/159, the General Assembly requested the Committee to review its membership and composition, with the participation of observers, to consider proposals regarding the membership and composition of the Committee and to report on the results of its deliberations to the Sixth Committee at the fifty-third session of the General Assembly.

12. At the 191st meeting, on 18 February, the Chairman clarified the issue of participation of observers by characterizing the Committee as a transparent body whose meetings were always open to participation by any interested delegation. This practice was based on and consonant with the pertinent provisions of General Assembly resolution 2819 (XXVI). In accordance with paragraph 8 of that resolution, the General Assembly authorized the Committee to convene "whenever it is convoked by its Chairman at the request of any State Member of the United Nations". It had always been the understanding of the Committee that if a delegation was unable to inform the Chairman or the Secretary in advance of the meeting of its intention to participate therein, it could do so before the start of the meeting. There had also been instances in which observers were admitted during the course of the meeting. The Committee unanimously confirmed this practice.

13. The Chairman then informed the Committee that the Bureau had begun consultations and had reviewed the history of the establishment, composition and changes in the membership of the Committee since its establishment in 1971. In keeping with the established practice, the Committee decided that the Bureau should continue to be seized of this question with a view to formulating specific recommendations for the Committee.

14. At the 192nd meeting, on 13 May 1998, the Chairman reminded the Committee that it had been established as a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly. In accordance with paragraph 5 of Assembly resolution 2819 (XXVI), the Committee was to be composed of "the host country and 14 Member States to be chosen by the President of the General Assembly in consultation with regional groups and taking into consideration equitable geographic representation thereon". Since 1971, the composition of the Committee had changed twice, in 1973 and 1976. Those changes had been reported by the Assembly Presidents and endorsed by the Assembly in decisions taken at its twenty-first and twenty-sixth sessions. Thus, in 1973, Costa Rica and Honduras had filled the vacancies caused by the withdrawal of Argentina and Guyana, and in 1976, Senegal had filled the vacancy caused by the withdrawal of the United Republic of Tanzania.

15. The Chairman also informed the Committee that the Bureau was of the view that over the years the Committee had worked well as an open, transparent and flexible body. No member had the right of veto in the Committee. Any interested delegation could participate in it as an observer. The Bureau also believed that the Committee was of a unique nature since it was the only body in the United Nations system that was mandated to consider matters in relation to the host country and then to report thereon to the General Assembly. The Bureau discussed various ideas, including the possibility of rotation and enlargement of the membership of the Committee, and asked the Chairman to conduct informal consultations with Committee members on those issues. After having heard the results of such consultations, the Bureau felt that the issues should be considered by the Committee as a whole in order to make use of the collective wisdom of its members.

16. The representative of the United States stated that the Committee had always operated transparently. No observer had ever been denied access, and many of its most important decisions had been taken following requests by observer delegations. The decisions had been taken rapidly and efficiently, largely because the Committee's membership was limited but representative. The United States would like to keep it that way. On those rare instances when the Committee had been faced with issues that affected the United Nations diplomatic community as a whole, it had formed working groups. The representative of the United States further observed that advocates of major change in its membership and composition had alleged that the Committee was less than transparent, and that some members – presumably the host country itself – had a veto over the Committee's work. That was a falsehood; there was no such veto and there never had been. The Committee tried to work by consensus, which was the United Nations ideal. The United States did, however, support change in the Committee's membership. Such a change should be accomplished by rotating the members, which could best be achieved on a voluntary basis. The United States did not support the expansion of the Committee's membership, which would not be in the interest of efficiency as it continued to work to serve the interests of all Member States and observers.

17. The representative of Côte d'Ivoire said that the principles of rationality and efficiency were essential for the

Committee to be able to discharge its duties. Rationality would facilitate promptness, effectiveness and agreeableness. Efficiency would allow the Committee to reach speedy and wise decisions. A limited membership was best for the Committee, with open-ended working groups. That was how the Committee had worked in the past. However, if consensus emerged for an expansion of its membership, Côte d'Ivoire would remain flexible. There was a need to emphasize rationality and efficiency in relation to the size of any expansion.

18. The representative of China observed that the Committee had been operating for decades in a highly efficient manner and by consensus. China endorsed the principles of rationality and efficiency, and believed that the Committee should not be too large, as that would not contribute to rapid decision-making. China remained open-minded and was ready to continue to contribute to the work of the Committee as a member. It did not have any specific proposal, but would seriously consider proposals put forward by other delegations.

19. The representative of the United Kingdom said that the Committee had discharged its functions effectively over the years and its current membership had worked well. Its work involved practical day-to-day issues requiring that the Committee retain its present size. The Committee had been transparent and flexible regarding the right of observer delegations to participate in its work. Any Member State that did have issues to raise relevant to the work of the Committee could do so. No delegation was ever excluded. There was no obvious need for radical changes in the composition of the Committee. If there were delegations that wished to devote their energies to other matters and leave the Committee, they were free to do so and would be replaced by new members. However, such delegations as his own, which had worked on the Committee for a number of years, should be allowed to continue doing so.

20. The observer of Cuba expressed his delegation's satisfaction at the efforts exerted by virtually all members of the Committee to resolve complex and varied problems. The Committee had been created when the United Nations consisted of 130 States. In its resolution 52/159, the General Assembly had requested the Committee, with the participation of observers, to review its composition and membership. Cuba had consistently advocated such a review of this and other organs of the Organization, based on the view that the majority of United Nations bodies should be open-ended. Cuba wished to advance a flexible proposal, which reflected the principle of equitable geographical distribution and also took account of the principle of proportionality. In 1971 the Committee had consisted of one representative per 8.67 Member States. Currently, the United Nations was much larger, and that change should be reflected in the Committee. In response to similar ideas, the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization had been prudently expanded, as had other bodies, without any loss in effectiveness. All Member States had the right to participate and to contribute equally in all United Nations organs. Cuba favoured a small, rational increase in the membership of the Committee, up to 26 members. With that increase the African Regional Group would have seven members; the Asian Regional Group would have six; the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Group would have four; the Eastern European Regional Group would have three and the Western European and Other States Regional Group would have five.

21. The representative of the Russian Federation said that since its inception the Committee had helped to resolve certain very complex problems related to the security of the missions in New York. This was a unique body in the United Nations system. There were no serious arguments militating in favour of a need to increase the membership of this body. The Russian delegation was not convinced that an expanded Committee would work more effectively than it worked at present. The practice concerning the composition of this body had been for the President of the General Assembly to consult with the regional groups bearing in mind the principle of equitable geographical distribution. Therefore, States that were members of the Committee represented not just themselves but to some extent their respective regional group, which was an extremely important factor. The procedures of the work in the Committee had changed over the years and had become more open. Observer delegations were free to participate in its work without such formalities as insistence on prior notice or on rigid compliance with procedure when taking the floor. The Committee did not provide for the right of veto and worked on the basis of consensus. There was no need for radical change in its composition at this stage.

22. The representative of Costa Rica said that since becoming a member of the Committee her delegation had always discharged its responsibilities with the utmost dedication. For nearly three decades, the Committee had fulfilled its mandate in an effective and responsible manner. She agreed that the Committee's work should be inspired by two principles, namely, rationality and efficiency. Its membership should not be too large and the principle of voluntary rotation among its members, with the obvious exception of the host State, deserved serious consideration. The Committee was a unique body of its kind, in which the

right of veto did not exist. In considering the various proposals that had been presented, Costa Rica would adopt a flexible and constructive approach in order to contribute to a consensus. Like China, it was ready to continue its participation in the Committee, to which it attached great importance.

23. The representative of Iraq reaffirmed that the Committee had accomplished many important tasks, including its consideration of such issues as health insurance, diplomatic indebtedness and the safety of mission personnel. Iraq at that stage had no specific comments to make on the proposals put forward by other delegations. It would present its observations and remarks at a later stage.

24. The representative of France expressed his appreciation at the efforts of the Bureau to enable the Committee to respond to the request of the General Assembly in a manner satisfactory to all. The Committee had thus far fulfilled its mandate in an entirely satisfactory manner. Its transparency was reflected by the presence of many observer delegations. The Committee generally worked on the basis of consensus, with no special veto, and with each member delegation on an equal footing. The Bureau had been able to resolve delicate questions, and issues had been solved generally to the benefit of all members of the United Nations. The principles of rationality and efficiency should guide the Committee. By following them, it could fulfil its mandate, which was to resolve issues of a practical nature. In the past, the President of the General Assembly had consulted with the members of the Committee to determine which delegation wanted to give up its membership and which wished to replace it. Perhaps it was time to resume that procedure. It was essential that those States wishing to remain on the Committee, such as his own, could continue to make their contributions. The Committee must strive to maintain and even improve its transparency.

25. The observer for Malta said that while efficiency was important, there was no specific number that guaranteed its achievement. The question of increased representative membership of this body was important to be consistent with the increased membership of the Organization.

26. The representative of Senegal expressed the view that the current discussion reminded him of the discussion on reform of the Security Council, in which the principles of efficiency and democratization had been cited. Given the Committee's importance, it was appropriate to remain mindful of both of those principles. Impressive work had been done by the Committee to the satisfaction of the United Nations. Consultations, insofar as possible, should be continued among Member States and with the regional groups in order to find a solution on the matter.

27. The representative of Honduras observed that the Committee had done satisfactory work ever since its creation and her country would need to further reflect on the matter before being convinced of the need for a change in its composition. Voluntary rotation, however, was a good idea for increasing the participation of the regional groups. To that end, consultations with those groups would be useful. Honduras would be flexible in considering the various proposals.

28. The observer for Malaysia stated that since the establishment of the Committee there had been no major changes in its composition. The Committee members were still the same. In view of transparency and the need to ensure that the Committee represented the interests of all the regional groups and to be consistent with the increase in the membership of the United Nations since 1971, Malaysia supported the proposal of Cuba to increase the membership of the Committee to 26. Thus, more members would be involved in the resolution of such issues as parking violations. A rotating membership was difficult to implement, but a formula could be worked out that at least one member from each regional group could voluntarily rotate its seat. The Malaysian delegation could be flexible about this idea. However, it firmly supported the principle of equitable geographical distribution and would support any proposal to that end.

29. The observer for the Syrian Arab Republic said no one had questioned the Committee's effectiveness. However, it was important to keep abreast of all recent developments in the United Nations system. The status quo should not be the standard of work of this Committee. The Syrian delegation supported the proposal by Cuba to expand the membership of the Committee and hoped that there would be meaningful change in the composition and membership to reflect the increased membership of the United Nations as well as the membership in other organs of the United Nations system. The rotation system should not be viewed favourably because it could disrupt the continuity of work in this Committee. However, at this point in time, the rotation system could be useful, but more important was the increase in the membership and the expansion of the Committee, matters on which the Syrian Arab Republic would call for serious consideration.

30. In summing up the debates, the Chairman thanked all delegations for the positive spirit prevailing during the discussions. The Committee decided that the Bureau should continue to be seized of the matter.

31. The 193rd meeting, on 17 September 1998, was devoted to the consideration of this matter. The Chairman informed the Committee that he had conducted further

informal consultations with delegations on various ideas put forward by them during the previous meeting. The results of such consultations had been reported to the Bureau, at its meeting on 14 July 1998. The members of the Bureau were generally of the view that over the years the Committee had worked well as an open, transparent and flexible body. As to certain ideas regarding a possible expansion of the Committee's membership, the members of the Bureau were not able to achieve a unified vision and, therefore, decided again to move the debate to the Committee as a whole.

32. The representative of the United States thanked the Chairman for the accurate summation of where the Committee stood regarding the issue of its expansion. The composition of the Committee was of great importance to the host country and should be of equal importance to other delegations. As the host country, the United States felt that its views regarding the composition and the size of the Committee should carry some weight. The Committee had worked well over the decades, in part due to its relatively small number of members – members who nonetheless supported the interests of other delegations in their regional groups. States seeking to participate in the Committee as observers had never been denied access thereto. The decisions, some of which were based on requests and presentations by observer delegations, had been taken rapidly and efficiently. The Committee always operated transparently. No delegation had a veto over the Committee's work. The Committee tried always to work by consensus. Consensus was obviously easier to reach in a smaller Committee than in a larger one. But when a vote was needed, it had been taken. Such votes made no provision for veto. The host country delegation was not convinced that there was a need for expansion. However, some form of rotation could be studied and implemented to give other countries an opportunity to work on host country matters.

33. The observer for Cuba noted that a large number of the members and observers of the Committee had previously expressed the view that they preferred envisaging modification of the composition and membership of the Committee on the basis of the principle of equitable geographical representation. The change, already being reflected in other United Nations bodies, was necessary to ensure democracy and transparency in the Committee's work. Cuba believed that the current composition of the Committee was restrictive. The Committee could not continue to operate in the manner it had since its establishment in 1971. The Committee could better reflect the current larger membership of the Organization. He reiterated the proposal that the Committee should be made up of seven African States, six from Asia, four from Latin America and the Caribbean, three from Eastern Europe, five from Western Europe and other States, and the host country. This proposal was based upon the principles of equitable geographical distribution and the sovereign equality of Member States.

34. The representative of the Russian Federation observed that his delegation would prefer to keep the existing system by which the members of the Committee were appointed in consultation with regional groups, taking into account the principle of equitable geographical representation. If the mentioned system and the main body of the Committee remained unchanged, the Russian Federation was ready to consider a certain amount of membership rotation, keeping in mind the purpose of ensuring the effective functioning of the body. It was also prepared, in the spirit of compromise, to consider proposals on a small increase in the Committee's membership.

35. The observer for Malta expressed the view that the Committee should be more representative, transparent and pragmatic. The presence and participation of observers made the work of the Committee more relevant to all. If the Committee remained closed and non-representative, it would discourage the presence of observers in the future. He urged the expansion of the Committee to reflect the growing membership of the Organization. Rotation was not a solution in this case.

36. The observer for the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya said that the reform of the Committee's membership was required because of the increase in the membership of the United Nations. The host country had a "quasi-virtual veto" in the Committee. The membership of the Committee must be rather open-ended to ensure transparency and the ability to deal with all problems encountered by Member States.

37. The representative of Honduras expressed the view that an increase in the Committee's membership might eventually benefit the body. It would make the Committee more representative and it would better reflect the membership of the Organization as a whole.

38. The observer for Malaysia supported an increase in the Committee's membership, based on the principle of equitable geographical distribution, to reflect the present size of the United Nations. His delegation did not believe that the Committee membership should not be reviewed just because it had done a good job. It was a question of fair representation. He supported the proposal previously made by the Cuban delegation.

39. The Chairman, in summing up the deliberations, expressed his appreciation to all delegations that had

participated therein and said that the matter would be taken up by the Sixth Committee.

40. At the 194th meeting on 30 October 1998, the Chairman announced that he had consulted members of the Committee as well as representatives of the observer delegations that had participated in the debates on the subject, who had agreed to an increase of four new members, including one each from the African, Asian, Latin American and Caribbean and Eastern European regional groups.

B. Consideration of and recommendations on issues arising in connection with the implementation of the Agreement between the United Nations and the United States of America regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations: host country travel regulations

41. At the 192nd meeting, the observer for Cuba drew the attention of the Committee to a situation recently faced by the Cuban Mission with respect to restrictions imposed on the movement of its personnel. On 5 May 1998, the Mission had requested authorization for the Permanent Representative to travel beyond the 25-mile zone in response to an invitation to attend, in Washington, D.C., a religious service for and the funeral of Dr. Benjamin Spock, a paediatrician and internationally recognized eminent personality who was also an active collaborator with the United Nations Children's Fund. The travel authorization had been declined by the United States Mission on the basis that the journey was unrelated to official functions of the Cuban Mission. The General Assembly had adopted a series of resolutions in which it had urged the host country to remove the travel limitations and restrictions imposed upon certain permanent missions, including the Cuban Mission, as well as on staff members of the Secretariat of certain nationalities. The recent rejection had been issued in complete disregard of the humanitarian nature of the request. It was in flagrant violation of the obligations of the host country under the Headquarters Agreement. He urged the host country to give a coherent and credible response to repeated requests by the Cuban Mission that the travel restrictions in force against the diplomatic personnel of the Cuban Mission be lifted.

42. The representative of the Russian Federation reaffirmed his country's position that the existing restrictions on travel placed on certain missions were not consonant with international law. Those restrictions should be removed as soon as possible. It was hoped that this rather old problem could be resolved.

C. Responsibilities of permanent missions to the United Nations and their personnel, in particular the problem of claims of financial indebtedness and procedures to be followed with a view to resolving the issues relating thereto

43. At the 191st meeting, the Committee resumed consideration of problems relating to claims of financial indebtedness. The representative of the United States stated that the Committee's aggressive dealing with diplomatic indebtedness combined with the direct involvement of the United Nations Secretariat had resulted in a decrease of the amounts owed from approximately $13 million in 1996 to approximately $2.5 million in 1997. During 1997, debts in the amount of $1,263,758 were cleared. Unfortunately, since November 1997 the United States Mission had become aware of an increase of $1 million. As at February 1998, 19 permanent missions and United Nations staff members had debts in the amount of $3,633,400, of which $3,170,312 was owed by nine missions. While acknowledging that some of the Governments involved were experiencing political and economic disruptions, it was becoming increasingly difficult for the United States Government to persuade creditors not to seek relief through judicial means and to accept the good offices of the United States Mission to collect the amounts owed by the diplomatic community. The United States Government continued to intervene as necessary on behalf of those missions and individuals with diplomatic privileges and immunities to prevent eviction, attachment of bank accounts or court appearances. However, it had a clear obligation to protect the interests of its citizens and creditors, who often were unable to obtain legal relief from immune diplomatic agents. The host Government, therefore, continued to work with the concerned parties to attempt to resolve the matter. Unfortunately, there had been a few cases in which court-ordered family support obligations had not been met by certain staff members of the Secretariat. The host Government expressed the hope that those few cases would be reviewed and resolved. The Working Group established by the Committee offered great promise for resolving the problem of indebtedness in the diplomatic community. The host country delegation looked forward to working with the Chairman of the Committee, the Legal Counsel and the Chairman of the Working Group on Indebtedness in this very important endeavour.

44. The observer for Switzerland informed the Committee that the diplomatic community in Geneva owed debts exceeding 7 million Swiss francs. Of that amount, half was owed by 2 missions, 30 per cent was owed by 6 missions and smaller amounts were owed by another 15 missions. In some cases, the indebtedness was the result of internal problems in the countries concerned, but in other cases it was less understandable.

45. The Chairman of the Committee stated that the problem of indebtedness was of significant concern and touched on the image of the entire diplomatic community. He encouraged the members of the Committee to strive to resolve the problem in a constructive manner.

D. Other matters

46. At the 190th meeting, on 17 November 1997, a Vice-Chairman announced that, effective 31 October 1997, Ambassador Agathocleous had left the Cypriot Mission and therefore could not continue as Chairman of the Committee. Consultations were held among the interested delegations on the question of succession, the results of which had been reported to the Bureau on 13 November 1997. The Bureau unanimously decided to recommend to the Committee to elect for this position the newly appointed Permanent Representative of Cyprus, Ambassador Sotirios Zackheos. The Committee elected by consensus Mr. Zackheos as its new Chairman.

47. On 24 February 1998, under the auspices of the Committee and in close cooperation with the host country mission, a health insurance fair was organized for the diplomatic community. The prospective providers, Well Care Management Group, Inc., University Group Medical Associates, P.C., Aetna US Healthcare, Empire Blue Cross and Blue Shield and Louise Maher and Associates, Inc., presented their respective health insurance services with the assistance of charts and other visual and printed materials and responded to questions raised by the participating delegations. The Chairman reminded the Committee that delegations were to decide on their own which of the proposals was most suitable for them.

48. At the 192nd meeting, the representative of Cyprus informed the Committee of two instances when, with the assistance of the emergency number given by the host country mission, two illegally parked cars in a parking space reserved for the Cypriot Mission had been swiftly removed therefrom.

49. The Chairman informed the Committee that Mr. Christov was about to relinquish his functions at the Bulgarian Mission and thus would resign in his capacity as the Chairman of the Working Group on Indebtedness. On behalf of the Committee, he thanked Mr. Christov for his cooperation and dedication to the Committee and said that informal consultations would be conducted with the members of the Committee in order to identify a suitable candidate for consideration by the Committee.

IV. Recommendations and conclusions

50. At its 194th meeting, on 30 October 1998, the Committee approved the following recommendations and conclusions:

(a) As a result of the Chairman's consultations with Committee members as well as representatives of observer delegations who participated in the debates referred to in paragraphs 11–40 of the present report, the Committee recommends that its membership be increased by four members, including one each from the African, Asian, Latin American and Caribbean and Eastern European regional groups;

(b) The Committee welcomes the participation of Members of the United Nations and representatives of the Secretariat in its work and is convinced that its important work has been strengthened by the cooperation of all concerned;

(c) Considering that the maintenance of appropriate conditions for the normal work of the delegations and the missions accredited to the United Nations is in the interest of the United Nations and all Member States, the Committee appreciates the efforts made by the host country to that end and anticipates that all issues raised at its meetings, including those referred to below, will be duly settled in a spirit of cooperation and in accordance with international law;

(d) Considering that the security of the missions accredited to the United Nations and the safety of their personnel are indispensable for their effective functioning, the Committee appreciates the efforts made by the host country to this end and anticipates that the host country will continue to take all measures necessary to prevent any interference with the functioning if missions;

(e) The Committee notes the efforts made by the host country mission concerning the problem of parking of diplomatic vehicles and requests the host country to continue to take steps, in conjunction with the City of New York, to resolve this problem in order to maintain appropriate conditions for the functioning of the delegations and

missions and missions accredited to the United Nations in a manner that is fair, non-discriminatory, efficient and consistent with international law, to bring to the attention of New York City officials reports from the diplomatic community about cases of discriminatory treatment against diplomats in order to ameliorate the situation and to promote compliance with international norms concerning diplomatic privileges and immunities, and to continue to consult with the Committee on these important issues. The Committee further stresses its appreciation for the efforts of its Working Group on the problem of parking of diplomatic vehicles and those of the host country delegation, and urges the host country to continue to bring to the attention of the appropriate city authorities the proposals made in its Working Group;

(f) Concerning travel regulations issued by the host country with regard to personnel of certain missions and staff members of the Secretariat of certain nationalities, the Committee notes that there were no changes in the regulations during 1998 and continues to urge the host country to remove the remaining travel restrictions as soon as possible; in that regard, the Committee also notes the positions of the affected Member States, of the Secretary-General and of the host country;

(g) The Committee expresses its appreciation for the efforts of its Working Group concerning financial indebtedness, noting that this issue has also arisen in other host cities, and therefore requires a system-wide approach. In that regard, the Committee stresses the importance of permanent missions, their personnel and Secretariat personnel meeting their financial obligations;

(h) The Committee further expresses its appreciation for the Working Group's efforts in identifying organizations that could provide affordable medical insurance or health care to members of the diplomatic community, and urges permanent missions and their members to take advantage of such programmes;

(i) The Committee wishes to reiterate its appreciation to the representative of the United States Mission in charge of host country affairs and to the Host Country Affairs Section of the United States Mission to the United Nations, as well as to those local entities that contribute to its efforts to help accommodate the needs, interests and requirements of the diplomatic community and to promote mutual understanding between the diplomatic community and the people of the City of New York.

Annex I

List of topics for consideration by the Committee

1. Question of the security of missions and the safety of their personnel.

2. Consideration of and recommendations on issues arising in connection with the implementation of the Agreement between the United Nations and the United States of America regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations, including:

   (a) Entry visas issued by the host country;

   (b) Acceleration of immigration and customs procedures;

   (c) Exemption from taxes.

3. Responsibilities of permanent missions to the United Nations and their personnel, in particular the problem of claims of financial indebtedness and procedures to be followed with a view to resolving the issues relating thereto.

4. Housing for diplomatic personnel and for Secretariat staff.

5. Question of privileges and immunities:

   (a) Comparative study of privileges and immunities;

   (b) Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations and other relevant instruments.

6. Host country activities: activities to assist members of the United Nations community.

7. Transportation: use of motor vehicles, parking and related matters.

8. Insurance, education and health.

9. Public relations of the United Nations community in the host city and the question of encouraging the mass media to publicize the functions and status of permanent missions to the United Nations.

10. Consideration and adoption of the Committee's report to the General Assembly.

Annex II

List of documents

A/AC.154/INF/3	Letter dated 13 February 1998 from the Chairman of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country addressed to Permanent Missions of Members and of Observers to the United Nations
A/AC.154/315	Letter dated 9 March 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country
A/AC.154/316	Letter dated 14 April 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country
A/AC.154/317	Letter dated 9 April 1998 from the Representative of the United States of America on the Economic and Social Council addressed to the Chairman of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country
A/AC.154/318	Letter dated 15 May 1998 from the Minister Counsellor for Host Country Affairs of the United States Mission to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country
A/AC.154/319	Letter dated 14 May 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country
A/AC.154/320	Letter dated 19 October 1998 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation addressed to the Chairman of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country
A/AC.154/321	Letter dated 30 October 1998 from the Minister Counsellor for Host Country Affairs of the United States Mission to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country

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